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Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 24 June 2005 from the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that the Committee on Contributions shall advise the Assembly with regard to the application of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations. I also have the honour to refer to requests for exemption under Article 19 from the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Liberia, the Niger, the Republic of Moldova, Somalia and Tajikistan, which you and the Acting President transmitted to me for appropriate action by the Committee.

In connection with those requests, the Committee has asked me to transmit to the General Assembly without delay the section of its report on its sixty-fifth session dealing with those questions so as to facilitate early action by the Assembly (see annex).

(*Signed*) Ugo **Sessi**
Chairman
Committee on Contributions

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Annex

Section of the report of the Committee on Contributions on its sixty-fifth session regarding requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter*

VI. Application of Article 19 of the Charter

71. The Committee recalled its general mandate, under rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to advise the Assembly on the action to be taken with regard to the application of Article 19 of the Charter. It also recalled the Assembly's decisions in its resolution 54/237 C concerning procedures for the consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19 and the results of its own consideration of this subject.

Requests for exemption under Article 19

72. The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/237 C, had urged all Member States in arrears requesting exemption under Article 19 to provide the fullest possible supporting information, including information on economic aggregates, Government revenues and expenditure, foreign exchange resources, indebtedness, difficulties in meeting domestic or international financial obligations and any other information that might support the claim that failure to make necessary payments was due to conditions beyond the control of the Member States. The Assembly also decided that requests for exemption under Article 19 must be submitted by Member States to the President of the Assembly at least two weeks before the session of the Committee so as to ensure a complete review of the requests.

73. The Committee noted that, on the basis of the latter provision, the deadline for receipt of requests for exemption under Article 19 by the President of the General Assembly was 23 May 2005 for consideration by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session. It also noted that an announcement to that effect was included in the *Journal of the United Nations* from 13 January to 25 March and 1 to 23 May 2005. Eight requests for exemption under Article 19 were received by the time specified in the resolution. By comparison, 10 such requests were received within the specified time frame in 2004, 9 in 2003, 7 in 2002, 3 in 2001 and 7 in 2000.

74. **The Committee also noted that two requests had been received after the time specified in the resolution. The Committee emphasized that, in order to minimize such occurrences in future, every effort should be made to remind Member States of the deadline established by General Assembly resolution 54/237 C. In that context, it requested the Secretariat to continue to include an early announcement on the subject in the *Journal*.**

* The full report of the Committee will be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 11* (A/60/11).

75. In considering the requests, the Committee had before it information provided by the eight Member States concerned and the Secretariat. It also met with representatives of the Member States, relevant units of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme.

76. The Committee also met with a representative of the African Union, who provided information on the situation of the four African States whose requests for exemption were being considered by the Committee. The Committee noted that three of the four States were not permitted to vote in the African Union because of non-payment of contributions.

77. **The Committee noted with concern that the nature and quality of the information provided by Member States requesting exemptions under Article 19 varied widely, with some providing little, if any, information to support their requests. In this context, the Committee recalled the provisions of General Assembly resolution 54/237 C and recommended that the Assembly again urge all Member States requesting exemptions under Article 19 to submit as much information as possible in support of their requests.**

78. **The Committee recalled that, while the submission of a payment plan should be taken into account as one factor when requests for exemption under Article 19 are considered by the Committee on Contributions and the General Assembly, the submission of a plan was not automatically linked to exemption. Accordingly, Member States requesting exemption under Article 19 should continue to provide supporting information in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 54/237 C.**

79. The Committee recalled its request to the Secretariat to provide as much detailed additional information as possible on the situation of Member States requesting exemption under Article 19.[a] In that context, some members felt that the deadline specified in resolution 54/237 C should be four weeks before the Committee's session rather than two, so as to allow more time for the Secretariat to provide the information requested. Others felt that this would place too great a burden on the Member States concerned.

80. The Committee recalled that its established practice was to recommend that exemptions granted under Article 19 remain in effect until 30 June of the following year. Some members noted that this meant that Member States requesting an exemption faced the prospect of losing their vote between 1 July and the date on which the General Assembly took action on the related recommendations of the Committee on Contributions. They proposed that exemptions should be granted through the end of the following session of the Assembly, that is, to September of the following year. Other members noted that the current practice ensured an exemption through the following session of the Committee and saw no reason to change it.

81. **The Committee noted that four of the Member States that had requested exemption under Article 19 by the date specified in General Assembly resolution 54/237 C had presented multi-year payment plans for the payment of their arrears. While recognizing that such plans are voluntary and should not be automatically linked to other measures, the Committee encouraged all Member States requesting an exemption under Article 19 to consider, when possible, the submission of a multi-year payment plan.**

82. **In order to ensure that the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are available to the General Assembly as soon as possible, and in accordance with its past practice, the Committee authorized its Chairman to convey to the Assembly without delay the related section of its report.**

1. Central African Republic

83. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of the Central African Republic.

84. In its written and oral representations, the Central African Republic indicated that it was still facing major economic problems. Following a coup and uprisings, elections had been held and the President had just appointed a Prime Minister. Despite these positive developments, serious problems remained, and salaries, pensions and student scholarships remained unpaid. Insecurity in the provinces also hindered economic development and the collection of Government revenues.

85. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the situation in the Central African Republic. Although there had been political progress, the security situation was still a cause for concern, with attacks on economic targets in some areas. The economic and social situation remained grave, with food shortages and inadequate health and education services and a serious problem with HIV/AIDS. GDP growth had been negative since 2001, and it had reached a trough of -7.6 per cent in 2003. Exports had virtually been halved since the late 1990s, and the debt burden had increased by some 60 per cent during the same period. While efforts were being made to mobilize foreign assistance, the response so far had been limited.

86. The Committee recalled that the Central African Republic had twice indicated its intention to submit a schedule for the payment of its arrears but had not yet done so and had made no payments at all since 1998.

87. The Committee recalled that in its request for an exemption under Article 19 in 2004, the Central African Republic had indicated that the schedule of payments mentioned in its submission in 2003 was being drawn up and should be announced soon, but that it had not yet been submitted, nor had any explanation been provided. However, **on the basis of the information provided, the Committee concluded on balance that the failure of the Central African Republic to pay the full minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that the Central African Republic be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006. The Committee once again urged the Central African Republic to make some payments in the future so as to reduce, or at least avoid an increase in, its unpaid assessed contributions. It also encouraged the Central African Republic, in that connection, to submit the multi-year payment plan that it had earlier announced**.

2. Comoros

88. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 17 May 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Comoros to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of the Comoros.

89. In its written and oral representations, the Comoros referred to the seven years of political turmoil that it had suffered. The country's limited resources were needed to support the newly established democratic political institutions stipulated by the new Comorian Constitution. The Government had nevertheless recently made a payment of over $25,000, and, as soon as its situation was stabilized, it intended to pay the rest of its arrears.

90. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat. The situation of the Comoros had improved considerably since last year, with the completion of the new Union structure. The economy remained weak, however, with dependence on a few commodities, including vanilla. The country is also vulnerable to natural disasters and had water contamination problems following recent volcanic activity.

91. Some members were not convinced that a sufficient case had been made to grant an exemption under Article 19 to the Comoros. Others welcomed the payment received as an indication of the intention of the Comoros to reduce and eliminate its arrears and were inclined to support its request.

92. **The Committee noted the payment received from the Comoros and urged it to continue to make payments so as to reduce its arrears to the United Nations. In that context, it encouraged the Comoros to consider the possibility of submitting a multi-year payment plan.**

93. **The Committee concluded that, on balance, the failure of the Comoros to pay the full minimum necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that the Comoros be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006.**

3. Georgia

94. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 29 April 2005 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 20 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, which transmitted a letter dated 13 April 2005 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of Georgia.

95. In its written and oral representations, Georgia referred to its continuing problems. Although there had been significant improvements, it still did not have full control of its territory, and this had a definite impact on Government revenues. The Government placed a high priority on meeting its obligations to the United Nations, although its arrears were largely due to an unfair initial rate of assessment. It had made the payments scheduled for 2004 and 2005 and hoped that its payments could increase in future.

96. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the situation in Georgia. Negotiations had not so far resolved the continuing internal conflicts, and these conflicts had a clear impact on the Georgian economy and Government revenues. Georgia had to cope with significant numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries, as well as internally displaced persons. The country was also prone to natural disasters, and, despite some improvement, it faced continuing serious problems.

97. **The Committee concluded that the failure of Georgia to pay the minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that Georgia be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006.**

4. Guinea-Bissau

98. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 30 March 2005 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 29 March 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of Guinea-Bissau.

99. In its written and oral representations, Guinea-Bissau indicated that it was still confronted with grave economic and financial difficulties affecting peace and stability and the living conditions of its people. The Government still owed arrears of salaries to civil servants. Guinea-Bissau was committed to paying its contributions to the United Nations and would keep the issue of multi-year payment plans under continuous consideration.

100. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the country's situation. Legislative elections had been held, and a presidential election was under way. Despite these positive developments, the situation remained fragile and the international community was providing support and assistance. A round-table meeting was being arranged after the elections to mobilize resources. In the meantime, the country faced many serious economic and social problems. Life expectancy was low, and poverty was a serious problem.

101. Some members were not convinced that a sufficient case had been made to grant an exemption under Article 19 to Guinea-Bissau.

102. **The Committee concluded that the failure of Guinea-Bissau to pay the full minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that Guinea-Bissau be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006.**

103. **The Committee noted that, between 1995 and 1997, Guinea-Bissau had steadily reduced its arrears, but that since that time its arrears had increased. The Committee noted Guinea-Bissau's intention to establish a multi-year payment plan and encouraged it to submit such a plan as soon as possible, so as once again to reduce its outstanding assessed contributions. Some members recalled that this was the second occasion on which this intention had been declared.**

5. Iraq

104. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 10 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 6 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of Iraq.

105. In its written and oral representations, Iraq pointed to the dire circumstances that the Iraqi people had been enduring as a result of the practices of the former regime, which resulted in several wars and more than a decade of international sanctions. In addition to the human cost, there had been immense destruction of the country's infrastructure. Security problems were currently hampering the rehabilitation of the oil industry, which provided 90 per cent of Government revenue. Despite the enormous demands of reconstruction, Iraq was committed to meeting its financial obligations to the United Nations and had submitted a payment plan, the first instalment of which should be received soon.

106. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the scale of the problems facing Iraq following decades of war and international sanctions. Although resources were being mobilized and reconstruction efforts were under way, the task was enormous and the process was hampered by the security situation. At the same time, the political transition had been launched and the country had significant natural and human resources to tackle these challenges.

107. **The Committee concluded that the failure of Iraq to pay the minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that Iraq be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006. The Committee welcomed Iraq's commitment to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations, as reflected in the multi-year payment plan that it had submitted.**

6. Liberia

108. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 27 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 26 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, which transmitted a letter dated 11 May 2005 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

109. **The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/237 C, had decided that requests for exemption under Article 19 must be submitted by Member States to the President of the General Assembly at least two weeks before the Committee's session so as to ensure a complete review of the requests. As the letter from the Permanent Representative of Liberia had been received less than two weeks before the beginning of its session, the Committee decided that it could take no action on the request from Liberia.**

7. Niger

110. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 8 June 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 8 June 2005 from the Permanent

Representative of the Niger to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

111. **The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/237 C, had decided that requests for exemption under Article 19 must be submitted by Member States to the President of the General Assembly at least two weeks before the Committee's session so as to ensure a complete review of the requests. As the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Niger had been received after the beginning of its session, the Committee decided that it could take no action on the request from the Niger. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Niger for the payment of the second instalment under its multi-year payment plan in 2005.**

8. Republic of Moldova

112. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 20 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova.

113. In its written and oral representations, the Republic of Moldova provided information concerning its situation, as did the Secretariat. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova also indicated that his Government had made payments in excess of the amount included in its payment plan. On the basis of the information presented, members of the Committee were disposed to recommend acceptance of the request from the Republic of Moldova.

114. The Secretariat confirmed receipt of those payments on 16 June 2005, as a result of which the Republic of Moldova no longer fell under the provisions of Article 19.

115. **The Committee recognized with appreciation the considerable efforts that the Republic of Moldova had made to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations despite the serious problems that it continued to face.**

116. **The Committee recalled that Article 19 provided that the General Assembly may permit a Member subject to its provisions to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member. In that context, the Committee noted that the Republic of Moldova did not, in fact, currently fall under the provisions of Article 19. Accordingly, it concluded that no action was required by the Assembly.**

9. Somalia

117. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 21 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Somalia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of Somalia.

118. In its written and oral representations, Somalia referred to the devastating impact of the 15-year civil war. State infrastructure had been destroyed, State property had been looted and factories dismantled and exported. Physical infrastructure had also suffered due to years of neglect and misuse. In addition to the political problems facing the country, drought had adversely affected livestock exports over the past four years. In addition the freezing of the assets of Albarakat, the major banking institution, had impeded remittances and economic activity and had yet to be lifted. The recent tsunami had caused extensive damage to Somali fishing communities and destroyed mangroves and coastal vegetation. The transitional federal institutions created at the Nairobi peace conference in October 2004 had not inherited any financial assets, and there had been little assistance forthcoming so far from the international community. As a result, Somalia's failure to pay its assessed contributions to the United Nations was due to conditions beyond its control.

119. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the current situation in Somalia. There was a Transitional Federal Parliament, and a President, Prime Minister and Government had been selected. The Government was not yet fully installed in the country, however. While recent developments were quite positive, the situation was still very fragile and serious economic problems remained.

120. **The Committee concluded that the failure of Somalia to pay the minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that Somalia be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006.**

10. Tajikistan

121. The Committee had before it the text of a letter dated 21 April 2005 from the Acting President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, transmitting a letter dated 5 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations transmitting a letter dated 12 March 2005 from the Prime Minister of Tajikistan addressed to the President of the General Assembly. It also heard an oral representation by a representative of Tajikistan.

122. In its written and oral representations, Tajikistan referred to its continuing economic and social problems. External debt posed a pressing problem and restricted the Government's ability to implement poverty reduction programmes. The conflict in the country had forced many citizens to go abroad, and the Government was taking over responsibility for border patrols, a further burden on the national budget. Despite these problems, Tajikistan had continued to make payments under its multi-year payment plan. In view of its problems, Tajikistan requested that consideration be given to writing off its arrears to peacekeeping accounts that accrued before 2000.

123. The Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat concerning the situation in Tajikistan. While Tajikistan had gone a long way towards overcoming problems stemming from its civil war, its GDP was still below the pre-war level, much of the population was below the poverty line and the country was prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and landslides. As a

landlocked country, Tajikistan also faced higher import costs, and instability in neighbouring areas had had an adverse impact on its situation.

124. **The Committee noted with appreciation that, despite its continuing difficulties, Tajikistan had continued to fulfil the commitments that it had made under the plan that it submitted in 2000 and that its payments during 2000-2005 exceeded those scheduled in the plan. On the basis of the information provided, the Committee concluded that the failure of Tajikistan to pay the minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond its control. It therefore recommended that Tajikistan be permitted to vote until 30 June 2006.**

125. **As regards the request from Tajikistan that its arrears for peacekeeping activities that accrued before 2000 be written off, this goes beyond the competence of the Committee as a technical advisory body.**

Notes

[a] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 11* (A/59/11), para. 37.